

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 057 284

AC 010 671

AUTHOR Gueulette, David G.
 TITLE The Mass Media in Adult Education in the Developing Countries: A Literature Review.
 INSTITUTION Syracuse Univ., N.Y. ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Education.
 SPONS AGENCY Educational Resources Information Center, DIR.
 PUB DATE Oct 71
 NOTE 12p.
 EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
 DESCRIPTORS *Behavioral Objectives; Cultural Differences; *Developing Nations; Educational Strategies; *Educational Technology; Ethics; Information Theory; Learning Motivation; *Literature Reviews; *Mass Media
 IDENTIFIERS UNESCO

ABSTRACT

This literature review is in the form of a critique of the typical approaches to education in developing countries and the lack of attention to broad-based ethical issues. It is stated that no one is willing to discuss the real implications of promoting education in any land. Questions of social upheaval or loss of traditional values caused by increased attention to education in developing nations are said to be seldom mentioned. Three issues are called to the attention of writers in this field: (1) the lack of criticism of the UNESCO approach or the traditional export of educational systems and policy; (2) the fact that well-known authors do not seem willing to entertain considerations of so-called "ethical" questions; and (3) that many educators from developing nations are not challenging the theories and machinery of their influential counterparts. (Author/DB)

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THE MASS MEDIA IN ADULT EDUCATION
• IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:
A LITERATURE REVIEW

David G. Gueulette

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107 RONEY LANE | SYRACUSE, NEW YORK 13210

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ABSTRACT

This literature review is in the form of a critique of the typical approaches to education in developing countries and the lack of attention to broad-based ethical issues. No one is willing to discuss the real implications of promoting education in any land. Questions of social upheaval or loss of traditional values caused by increased attention to education in developing nations are seldom mentioned. Three issues call for attention by writers in this field: (1) the obvious lack of criticism of the UNESCO approach or the traditional export of educational systems and policy; (2) the fact that well-known authors do not seem willing to entertain considerations of so-called "ethical" questions; and (3) that many educators from developing nations are not challenging the theories and machinery of their influential counterparts.

THE MASS MEDIA IN ADULT EDUCATION IN

THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A

LITERATURE REVIEW

David G. Gueulette

I imagine it is somewhat uncommon for me to undertake a review of literature with motives such as mine. In the first place, this is as much a response to an earlier literature review in this newsletter by Henry Cassirer as it is a study of writings in this field. Mr. Cassirer submitted a survey titled: "The Use of Mass Media in Adult Education in Countries Outside the U.S. and Canada," that suggested many questions that I feel need discussion. As a member of the Department of Mass Communication for UNESCO, he represents a school of thought on education in foreign nations, especially developing ones, that demands critical attention. There is much in the general approach to education and the use of mass media by UNESCO that must be re-examined. In addition to the concern generated by Cassirer's article, I am bothered by the apparent lack of interest by experts in the area of what Wilbur Schramm calls "questions of ethics and responsibility," (20).^{*} This review, then, is a criticism of the typical approach to education in developing countries and of the lack of attention to broad based ethical issues.

It is not enough to list errors and omissions - although that could probably take an article of this length - something of a positive nature can also be supplied. I hope to fill in some of the missing considerations with my own observations. Much of the literature under the general heading of mass media in adult education really is dealing with the impact of new media or communication technology (sometimes called educational technology or educational communications) on education as a national program. That is to say that educational planners are concerned with the developing systems of education employing sophisticated technical procedures to instruct populations in desired skills or behavior. Of late, these systems have relied more and more on elaborate and expensive devices such as television networks, film production and even computer assisted instruction. While this newsletter is concerned, in the main, with adult education, I can not bring myself to limit my notions to this (often unidentifiable) target. Much of what is written about adult education is applicable to education in general and vice versa. So, in particular, I am interested in the emerging educational technology and education in general as a device for advancing specific national interests.

My first question is related to the fact that no one is willing to discuss the real implications of promoting education in any land. That is an unforgivable error in planning. Educational planners have seldom examined the reasons for establishing and expanding educational systems. Jefferson (although not an educator) suggested that education was necessary for an enlightened voting public; but, few others have outlined rationales for vast and compulsory school systems. American educators typically side-step the real issue in schooling the Nation's people. While they mention something about better citizenship, improved standard of living and a spiritual regard for obtaining knowledge, they avoid the sticky, but important, issues of education as a function of propaganda distribution by a

* Numbers in parenthesis refer to items in the bibliography beginning on page 8.

national government and as a means of limiting the size of the labor force in general and specific occupations. This tendency to ignore the basic purpose of education is true of educators planning programs in the United States and appears to be equally valid among those planners developing systems for developing nations. In other words, our planners are making most of the same mistakes abroad that they have made in the United States. Critics of the American educational systems are becoming louder and more in number. Perhaps, it is also time to tell the people abroad (many of whom have aped the U.S. model) that there are serious flaws in our institutions. Quite frankly, I am surprised that few, to my knowledge, have made this point. Ivan Illich (8,9,10,11,12) and possibly Ronald and Beatrice Gross (4,7) are about the only writers, I have uncovered, who are dealing with this issue.

Illich has had much to say on the futility of using conventional educational programs in developing countries. He is not opposed to the use of technology for education; rather, he is concerned with the inhumane nature and goals of schooling regardless of the methods. Illich and the Grosses appear to be a distinct minority in the overall writings on education for developing nations. Seldom, if ever, do terms such as "humane" or "appropriate" or "possible" show up in the many other works. More likely, the typical expert on education and media in developing countries takes the UNESCO position that if it can be funded do it.

UNESCO has contributed much to the general approach to the utilization of mass media in Third World nations and consequently has no doubt established the pervasive dogmatic attitude toward bringing to these countries highly technical, costly, mostly unnecessary, schemes for schooling. Beside many efforts to industrialize and mechanize the educational processes of developing lands, UNESCO has been energetic in the publishing and distribution of the "always successful programs" and imploring other organizations to follow their lead (21,22,23,24,25, 26,27). UNESCO's "New Educational Media in Action: Case Studies for Planners," is typical of the sort of material that it prints. It is full of cases in which new media is used for the improvement of the educative process. It soft sells to the readers the various paraphernalia that could be employed to mechanize schools in almost any country. It reminds me of several advertisements I saw last year that tried to sell weapons systems to small nations. From small arms to jet fighters, we have what is just right for . . . UNESCO publications are full of such advertisements to developing nations naturally under the guise of respectable research projects. The general omission of an hypothesis and the inclusion of insufferable amounts of irrelevant data indicate, to my satisfaction, that the project results are nothing but window dressing to market modern technical gadgetry.

Unfortunately, UNESCO is not the only party to this business: well-known and respected individual experts have added their pitch. Many prominent specialists in educational communications in universities and businesses and foundations have accepted the UNESCO approach. Few have been critical or questioning of the underlying reasons for this rationale. Beside the literature review, Cassirer has penned several other articles on the topic. In his article "Mass Media of Communication and the Development of Human Resources," (a popular theme) he recommends systems approaches of combined technical and conventional methods to maximize effectiveness of teaching. His only rationale for creating such schemes is the need to organize adults to meet the needs of a rapidly changing society. He does not mention what the organization is to do to meet these needs; but, I suspect it involves managing the adult into the acceptance of a new set of work and study values to make him more productive in the consumer world. The systems approach is not that well understood a phenomenon through which forces and elements are supposedly mustered and combined to bring about some dramatic result. It is a popular panacea often applied to marshaling human resources for national economic betterment. (3,20).

Other writers often rely on the personal observation approach. Perhaps, typical of the

personal observation and evaluation type reporting is a work by Roy, Waisanen and Rogers. Cassirer included this in his review and I thought it might shed some light on the way individuals went about appraising educational communications in developing nations. However, most projects have some sort of foundation money, I have found out, and this item was no different. It too had been funded by UNESCO. While the results of the study were at best ambiguous, (it compared educational media projects in Costa Rica and India) the authors concluded that at least the research procedure was useful. After looking at many UNESCO and individual studies, (these too somehow UNESCO affiliated) I am beginning to suspect that there is no chance for negative findings. If the results are unclear or not positive in terms of further sales of technology, the summaries by-pass the findings and stress the faults or virtues of the project and testing instruments.

More damaging than the articles or research studies on educational communications in developing countries, are the scholarly tomes that somehow become bibles for the students of this subject. One such authority is the very popular "Mass Media and National Development: The Role of Information in the Developing Countries," by Wilbur Schramm (20). Read by countless graduate students in education, it is a strong supporter of the vending of technical educational systems to developing nations. However, I must include a word of praise for Schramm; he does at least mention the existence of "ethical" questions. For example, he asks "What are the ethics of the kind of action we are talking about in this book? What are the ethics of using what we know about modern communication to assist social change even though we are aware that some people in any country will resist some of the changes that are desirable? What are the ethics of using modern communication to do the tasks we have just been talking about - encouraging 'productive' attitudes even though counterproductive ones may be held? Are we advocating that mass communication should be used in the developing countries to manipulate people? (20)". He goes on to say that "change" is inevitable, therefore, populations should be educated with the most efficient methods possible. For him, an increase in the standard of living is sufficient reason for massive education programs. The ethical questions are not answered; he suggests that betterment of the material human condition makes up for over-looking the basic issue of manipulation. Later, he states that improved information will give the various peoples more choice in matters of behavior and life styles. Thus, he is recommending that people be controlled initially so that they might have freedom later. This roundabout notion of freedom for populations is a standard one. However, the possibility for continued manipulation, after the first instance, probably triumphs over giving people later choice about education. So, it seems to me, that once a nation has agreed to massive behavior control i.e. education, it no longer really has the chance to re-instate the kind of individual decision making and freedom of choice that could have been a viable alternative before the advent of schooling systems.

Schramm and others never come to grips with this possibility. Progress, usually called "change" is the impetus and often apology for creating and selling educational systems that makes individual freedom impossible and substitutes schooled behavior. Scholars and personnel in UNESCO fail to consider the nature of the government in power in a given country. Thus, the most authoritarian power elite may be sold an effective system of behavior and thought control that perpetuates their autocratic practices without a moment's hesitation. In fact, UNESCO jumps at the chance to do such good deeds. The question of the humane use of education never comes up. Only issues of cost, practicability, and effectiveness are considered. When Schramm and others speak of education for national interest, they usually mean education for increasing the productive capacity of a country. They seldom suggest that education in the national interest may be a function of the government's restriction of the population. Even in the United States, educators are finally beginning to examine the

real intents of education as opposed to the accepted myths. More and more, they are finding that our institutions are really camps for suppressing creativity and freedom; and, that the government has no interest in advocating or encouraging more humane or liberal education. The United States is a good example of a nation whose people were willing to chance initial loss of individual choice for later material gain. Now many are clamoring for their lost freedom.

The fact that critics are finding much wrong with the U.S. schools should be further evidence that developing nations must think twice before they believe the plans of American or other kindred educators. If the end result of U.S. educational theories is our present system, we can hardly expect to give other people advice. Further, the constant controversy over methods and devices for schooling must suggest the muddle that constitutes our thinking. Specifically, the new educational communications theories are the butt of ever-expanding contradictions. There have been tests, research projects, trial programs, essays, plans, suggestions ad nauseam on the effect and effectiveness of first radio, films, television and now computer systems for education. The results are almost always ambiguous; usually, the various media are found to have no significant difference from any other form of instruction. What this really means is that mass media are used just as badly for education as have been our traditional methods. The fact that we have been unable to prove the new technology any better than the old techniques actually gives me some reassurance. At least we may not be peddling more effective thus more injurious schooling methods to the Third World nations. Perhaps the danger from the new equipment is no more than that from the conventional educational notions that have been exported. If the new communications technology is no more effective, why are educators so quick to push it onto the less advanced lands? Throughout the works on the topic of education for underdeveloped countries, one finds the same sort of growth mania that is common to so many other fields of modern endeavor. Bigger and better plans are associated with more sophisticated, elaborate, mechanical and costly apparatus. So, the trend has been to replace textbooks with radio, with films, with television, with computers, and so on and on. But, now the latest absurdity is to combine as many of the media as possible along with the usual methodology, into a massive "systems approach". This is perhaps the ultimate apparatus; and, the cost will be commensurate with the size of the undertaking.

The practical implications of developing such systems for education are as detrimental for the various peoples as are the philosophical/ethical issues. For example, the cost of creating and maintaining complex and expensive operations is over-burdening even for the most wealthy of the less advanced lands. The money spent on costly systems could be better used on cheaper, probably more reliable, conventional schooling; or, better yet, they could use the usually precious foreign exchange to acquire capital goods, medicine or needed scientific equipment. These nations would do well to obtain those things that could help them develop independent of outside influence - that certainly does not include educational procedures. Once a nation uses the educational model of another land, it stands a very good chance of becoming a cultural, social, intellectual, and economic archetype of the original.

Even with organizations such as the United Nations and its affiliates funding new educational programs, the cost of staffing, equipping, and maintaining the systems in countries that may not have the technical background and personnel to carry on the projects is too high. All too often, a project is initiated by an organization or foundation, then after a time, given over to the host country to continue. This is the goal, in fact, of most programs. This process is similar to the practice of several U.S. companies that give the consumer an item such as a camera or computer at low cost, then expect the buyer to purchase costly film or cards from them. An example of this in the

area of communications technology for education might be for some U.S. foundation to help fund a television facility for a given nation then to recommend that it use an expensive U.S. educational television series or that it buy its own video tapes from U.S. manufacturers. I believe that it is much more expensive to run a television station, for example, than to pay the original capital outlay. I also suspect that foundations are more interested in funding initial investments rather than maintenance costs. They expect the nations to be concerned enough to be willing to support the continuation of the programs.

While the United Nations may not really be in the business of profiteering off of the developing nations, it is probably just not concerned with the financial hardship of instituting media systems. Experts, who recommend expensive gear, are just not thinking through the implications of what they are doing. I wonder how many of them ever think of the problems of obsolescence or costly breakdown which are only a nuisance in the United States, but require the developing countries to shell out even more cash. Breakdown may end an entire program, but obsolescence usually invites the nation to buy a newer more costly system. Do the experts consider the expense of continued training of staff or the cost of required imported allied materials of instruction? I think they do not - perhaps, they do not even realize that education has become big business with many exportable products.

Several educators have begun to comment on the practice of exporting our packaged educational products; Ivan Illich (8,9,10,11,12) and Ronald and Beatrice Gross are in the fore-front. Illich has been writing and speaking endlessly on the general pervasive problems with schooling in the United States and elsewhere. He seems to be saying that schools are in trouble in all nations as a result of the inhumane and institutional methods usually employed in them. The never ending consumption of goods and services that is a main theme of schooling in the advanced countries has a dangerous effect on the behavior the people of those nations and the less developed ones as well. Soon the better off lands will face what other nations have been experiencing for some time i.e. limited resources for created wants and needs. Illich holds that the Earth is a closed system with limited resources to satisfy increasingly insatiable desires. In underdeveloped lands this dilemma is more acute. So, for these countries, especially, to be creating educational systems modeled on the Western (and now probably Eastern) notion of work, advancement, increased consumption and so on is a serious error. The best such schooling could do is increase aspirations, frustrations, and possibly social upheaval. Illich recommends that schools need to be abolished and some more humane and applicable method for learning necessary skills and behavior introduced. Using more and more technical and expensive educational communications not only continues the traditional unacceptable values, but exemplifies the tendency to build and sell more extravagant consumable paraphernalia.

Even if the developing nations can successfully copy the Western model, they could not hope to obtain the same level of so-called education and prosperity as the advanced countries. The gap is too large - the developed countries have had too much time and practice and have a well-defined work ethic. And, as some people in the advanced lands are beginning to notice, some of the backwash from prosperity i.e. pollution, social unrest, urban sprawl, even population increase; the continued emphasis on increasing standards of living through consumption is being questioned. This ties in with the concern for schools as they have certainly been instrumental in the expansion of consumption values. Illich never takes issue with the use of educational technology. In fact, he suggests that such equipment could be used to allow more humane and effective learning networks and information systems. He is opposed to using the new media with the same motives and methods that were employed by traditional schools. Illich might even suggest that new media offer a way out of the institution of schooling as it exists today. He has stated ..

repeatedly, however, that media can be used to stop-gap a nation's population in its desire for real education. In other words, a people can be conned into complacency if a government uses some token sophisticated educational equipment. He cites Brazil as an example of this facade (11).

Ronald and Beatrice Gross, like Illich have some hope for communication technology. At least so it seems from the title of a seminar they were to have given at the Center for Intercultural Documentation. They were offering a course titled: "Toward Some Humane Uses of Educational Technology," (4). In the course description, they put forth the following challenge: "How can present and emerging communications technologies be used by developing countries to promote humane development?" (4). Further, they suggested that the students in the seminar examine the new media as an alternative to present schooling problems and to consider the costs and effects of media in developing countries. I suspect that they have begun to give serious thought to the problems of education in these lands especially in terms of the impact of more effective distribution of educational opportunities and more centralized control of the schooling process. They seem to understand that centralization of schooling, which follows more complex technical systems, invites more restrictive, less humane education. I am looking for more from them in this area.

John Ohliger has said something about the dangers of technology and education; but, concludes that, like most other tools, it is really a neutral element that relies on human control (16). This neutralist position then puts the blame for misuse on the managers. I think I fundamentally agree with this notion; however, I can not agree to giving any additional tools to managers who seem to be using what they already have unwisely. Weapons systems too, I imagine, are essentially neutral; but, the option of using such tools seems to be unnecessary. Thus, to put more expensive and possibly more structured and controlled means of schooling into the hands of authoritarian or misguided governments may not be in the best interest of the various populations or the givers themselves. Therefore, this notion that the technology and its power has no real place in the consideration of its possible deleterious effects seems to me to be folly. I think the quality and scope of a given technical device has much to do with how it is used. For example, there is no question, in my mind, that television in the classroom invites, perhaps, even demands, impersonal detached viewing and learning. Thus, even if we had it in our minds to use television humanely, I am not sure we could. The real danger in applying new communications technology to schooling is that you may forever forego the ability to revert to less costly, less controlled systems. Very few countries could afford the initial investment in such systems, then to drop them if they were unsuccessful. So, it seems that once a country has made a commitment to this approach, it is all but irrevocable. This further suggests that developing nations should be very careful before they jump on the new media bandwagon.

I wish there was more being written on this topic that reflected a search for the real meaning of our exportation of education and its accouterments. Now that critics in education in the United States have taken up the fight to reform schooling into a more humane and appropriate form of learning experience, it is time to bring the issue of education as a marketable commodity in developing countries into the picture. Consideration of our role as purveyor of international education theory and equipment is certainly necessary in view of the increasing realization at home that much of what we have been doing in the schools is detrimental to learning and well-being.

Many of the "ethical" questions raised by Schramm need more careful attention. I can not agree that issues such as the right for an individual to decide for himself his own course, or the right to retain freedom of choice in learning can be dismissed by the

traditional plea for change in a changing world. I think it is naive to believe that people can give up their freedom to educate or learn in the way they wish so that they can gain the knowledge to later assert their freedom. Once they have given over the right to educate to their government, they have lost the power to determine their own behavior without the stamp of government dogma. The question of the right to manage other people on the scale suggested by educational technology is not easily dismissed. Very careful thought must be given to this issue before a nation should either import or export theory and accompanying apparatus.

Questions of social upheaval or loss of traditional values caused by increased attention to education in developing nations are very seldom mentioned. Traditional life styles and values are deemed unprogressive and harmful to a population a priori in comparison to modern technical advances. The detrimental effects of education for unending consumption are never listed. Educators do not, as a rule, suggest the implications of selling the Western World. Where are the reports on the disadvantages of industrialization?

If we are really concerned with the people of other lands, shouldn't we point out the troubles we have had with our own educational and subsequently social, political, and economic systems. Most of all, should we really be trying to sell education as if it were a product and as if it could really allow people to share the material wealth that the Americans have so conspicuously enjoyed? What kind of guarantees can we offer that educational systems can produce anything that is usually promised ie. health, consumer goods, food, participation in government, when in all likelihood, such benefits are not really possible when resources and governmental attitudes are not in agreement with these goals?

This literature review, as I suggested at the outset, has not been a conventional summary. It has left many points unresolved; and, in general, reflects my own distress for what has not been written. For me, there are three main areas of interest that should be attended to by experts in the field. The first, is the obvious lack of criticism of the UNESCO approach or the traditional export of educational systems and policy. The second, is the fact that well-known authors, for the most part, do not seem willing to entertain considerations of so-called "ethical" questions. Finally, I am worried that many educators from developing nations are not challenging the theories and machinery of their influential counterparts.

In these three general areas, I would like to see certain types of articles and books published: 1. Criticisms of current UNESCO activities and policies; 2. Questions on the popularity of selling educational ideologies and hardware; 3. Discussions on "ethical" issues such as large-scale management of populations by centralized mechanical schooling systems; 4. Evaluations of the worth of present U.S. and Western programs in education as they apply to these countries and the underdeveloped ones; 5. Re-examinations of traditional positions by noted experts in the fields of adult education, educational communications, and education in general; 6. Demonstrations by influential educational writers that developing countries need not necessarily be interested in Western models for schooling; and finally; 7. Indications by educational authorities and government officials in developing nations that they can be discerning in their selection of current theories and equipment, and that they are willing to consider more fundamental and possibly humane approaches to education.

Writing about these problems should only be the first step toward turning around our typical acceptance of the United States government, UNESCO, the Ford Foundation and several other developed nations as salesmen in the business of marketing educational systems. We should be willing to take serious issue with the treatment of education, developing nations, people as commodities.

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